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Basic tenets underlying the philosophy of programing for children with learning disabilities are presented. Focus is placed on the involvement of the classroom teacher utilizing clinical teaching which matches the demands of the task to the cognitive style of the learner. It is pointed out that learning disabilities range in degree from mild to severe and require a variety of treatment programs. A team approach requiring the support of the administration and the involvement of consultants, parents, and even students is seen as necessary to success. Materials are listed in the areas of reading, language arts, science, social studies, and math, and emphasis is placed on adjusting materials and teaching techniques for these children. Continual followup, evaluation, and revision are recommended. The paper emphasizes that classroom programing for children with special learning disabilities nearly always includes planning for use with the regular classroom teacher. (RT)

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CLASSROOM PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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Incorporation of the Learning Disabilities Approach in the Total School Curriculum:

Buried rather deeply in the philosophy of programming for children with learning disabilities which I shall be sharing with you this afternoon are some <u>givens</u> which I would like to delineate quite carefully while you are still awake, lest you become too involved in logistics and specifics and miss the impact of the important issues.

One of these <u>givens</u> involves the educability of intelligence itself. We are not in the business of teaching skills as such. Our primary focus needs to be placed on the systematic exercising of each of the 120 or more factors of intellect, so that each element in the ensemble is operating at the optimum level set by nature for each child. Thus, we are not surprised when a child literally becomes more intelligent than before.

A second <u>given</u> which we must all operate with is that there are too many children with special learning disabilities to be diagnosed by specialists, or taught by trained learning disabilities teachers. The only professional group present in the public schools in sufficient numbers to make a dent in the large number of children needing service is the regular classroom teacher. A classroom teacher can be trained to fit her observations of classroom behavior into a plan for clinical teaching which matches the demands of the task to the cognitive style of the learner.

A third <u>given</u> involves the fact that learning disabilities come in all shapes and sizes. They range in degree from mild to severe. It is imperative that a variety of programs be available, so that the degree of disability in the child can be matched by the degree of intensity of the service. It is only an extremely small percentage of the unknown percentage of children with special learning disabilities who ought to spend the entire day in a self-contained or segregated, if you will, classroom. By far the largest percent of children with special learning disabilities will be spending the majority of their day in a regular classroom, with or without consultant help to the teacher, or individual special programming directly to the child. At least as much thought needs to be given to his program in the regular class as we have given to his hour or two in the special class. The idea of the

encapsulated, insulated special education program is unthinkable when we look at the population of children we are attempting to serve.

A fourth basic assumption which underlies my comments today derives from our research project in the public schools. With few exceptions our data suggest that the farther a child is removed from the classroom and the school he "belongs" in, the more difficult it is to get him back into the mainstream of education. This given calls into question our practices of bussing handicapped children to special schools, to special classes in some other building, as well as the practice of excluding recalcitrant children from school and assuaging our consciences by sending a tutor to the home. This given suggests that we re-examine our organizational structure for providing services and think through some of the devices by which we now destroy a child's opportunity to join our society.

A fifth given, which would be difficult to tease out if you were not familiar with the school code in Illinois, involves a lack of willingness to permit state legislatures and state departments of education to lock you into a program which no longer makes sense for children, just because you might lose your reimbursement for that class or that teacher. In Illinois we are still locked into a model which calls for 10 children per teacher and five hours per week of individual instruction. Most children with special learning disabilities perform many of the remedial tasks better when there is someone else around to compete with. For many of them, their problem involves learning how to learn when they do not have all of the teacher's attention, when there are other children around to distract them. Creative scheduling of itinerant teachers, resource room teachers, and self-contained classes is a must, regardless of what your state office is trying to tell you. Be brave! Be militant! Design a program which best suits the children whom you serve, and then either sell it to your administrators, or shut up about it and do it anyway!

Now, what does a program in the public schools look like which is based on these kinds of assumptions?

At the end of seven years of providing services for special learning

disabilities children, including three years of a federally funded research and demonstration project, we find that the learning disabilities concept is a viable one. Is has been accepted enthusiastically by our teachers, our principals, our administrative staff, and our Board of Education. The entire program has been continued intact with nothing but local monies, even after the federal grant was terminated.

Of the 1100 children who have been served in some way by the learning disabilitfes program during the three year period, only a small proportion needed to be seen in the clinical teaching aspect of the program. A breakdown of the three possible functions of the diagnosticians, i.e., diagnosis, clinical teaching, and consultation, was done by year. Over the three year period in which the program was being studied, 149 children were served through the consultant program only; 809 children were involved in either minimal or extensive psychoeducational diagnosis for a total of 958 children served diagnostically by the psychoeducational diagnosticians. Of this group, the ratio of boys to girls was 3 to 1.

Over the same period of time, remediation was rendered to 580 children through involvement of the classroom teacher, and 189 children were involved in the clinical teaching aspect of the diagnostician's role. During the same period, 39 children were served in the resource room program. It is apparent from these data that the service of the psychoeducational diagnosticians which is most in demand is that of consultation to the regular classroom teacher.

In an effort to compare the itinerant program of the psychoeducational diagnosticians with the more traditional resource room program, which requires that children be bussed, the 39 children involved in the resource room program were matched on six variables with 39 children in the itinerant program. The results of this comparison of the two matched groups indicate that the children in the itinerant program do at least as well as, and, in some areas better than, those in the resource room program. In addition, a great many more children were served in the itinerant program.

The findings suggest that the two programs are equally effective in terms of the measured psycholinguistic abilities, visual perceptual

abilities, visual motor integration skills, language and arithmetic achievement skills. The groups were matched on six variables and were found not to differ on any significant variables before treatment or after treatment. The programs were equally effective for both groups. The rationale behind these findings includes the alienation caused by bussing children from their home schools, and teacher expectation. In terms of the numbers of children served, gains in basic psychological processes, school achievement, plus the expenses involved, the time, and the inconvenience, it was concluded that the itinerant program could be more effective in districts of comparable size and proximity of schools.

Thus, this coming year our major thrust will focus on direct service to the classroom teacher, emphasizing her involvement in the individualization of the normative program in the regular classroom. We will, however, continue with a primary classroom for the most severely disabled young children who could not possibly make it in a classroom with 30 other children. The major emphasis in this primary class will be placed on modifying classroom behavior so that the child will be able to tolerate the demands and pressures of the regular classroom. The decision to continue this program was made only after careful observation of the children involved who have had one year of kindergarten and one year of placement in a developmental first grade. The severity of their involvement is such that we would be unrealistic to place them in an itinerant learning disabilities program.

We will also continue with a resource room at the junior high. This decision was based on the fact that the demands of relating to seven or eight teachers in a departmentalized program are more than these students can handle without someone around to run interference for them - someone to interpret to secondary trained teachers why these children cannot meet the demands of their context-oriented programs - and someone who can translate the junior high curriculum into a second or third grade level of difficulty which these students with unremediated special learning disabilities can handle.

In the areas of reading and language arts, all the usual materials

and techniques are used during the special class time. Some of these which have proven most helpful include:

Language Arts

Bobbs-Merrill

McCall-Crabbs Standard Series

Lyons & Carnahan

Phonics We Use - E, F

Frank E. Richards

English We Need

George Wahr

Remedial Reading Drills, Hegge, Kirk, & Kirk

Continental Press

Reading Supplements

Kleeno Co.

Handwriting - Cursive

Barnell-Lofts Levels C, D

Using The Context
Following Directions
Getting The Facts
Working With Sounds
Locating The Answer

SRA

Cracking The Code

Gates-Peardon Exercises

McGraw-Hill - Webster Div.

Conquests in Reading
Dr. Spello
Basic Goals in Reading & Spelling
Webster Reading Clinic

Readers' Digest

Reading Skills Builders

Lyons & Carnahan

Handwriting with Write & See - 3

Allied Education Council

Fitzhugh Plus Program
Mott Basic Language Skills Program

In the areas of science, social studies, and math, there are a

variety of materials that are used, among them:

Science

Elementary Science Studies Kits

Living With Light
Teaching About Light
Food Additives
Weather

Frank E. Richards

Mental Hygiene - Workbook For You

Hubbard Scientific Co.

Family Living, Sex Education

Social Studies

Frank E. Richards

Finding Ourselves

Knowledge Aids

Adventures of Explorers Series

Math

Continental Press

Modern Math
Time

SRA

Kaleidoscope of Skills

Frank E. Richards

Arithmetic That We Need

Fearon Press

Money Makes Sense
Using Dollars and Sense

Steck-Vaughn Co.

New Working With Numbers Book 2, 3

McGraw-Hill

Using Mathematics in the Jr. High (Measurements, graphs)

We have also found that the large print World Books, which we have provided for our visually handicapped program, can be used effectively by children with special learning disabilities.

In the middle grades the school begins to make more demands on children for new kinds of learning. The problems for the child with

learning disabilities shift into behavior affecting the curriculum, i.e., the inability to use reading, writing, spelling, language, or math to further learning. He is aware that he often has difficulty following directions, organizing himself, and that his peer relationships aren't the best. He is familiar with the labels "slow," "lazy," "indifferent," and "stubborn." And sometimes he responds to the name by playing the game - everyone appears impatient to him - he can't do his school work independently. Is it any wonder he is fast developing a poor image of himself?

Much of today's commercial materials designed to help children with learning disabilities are designated for primary use, and in contrast, very little is marketed for the middle grade child with problems. Hence, the stress must be placed on the importance of adjusting materials and teaching techniques for these children.

A major force in successfully integrating a learning disability child in a regular classroom is to facilitate "curriculum equivalents" for those who must absorb the academic subject matter through media other than what the regular classroom provides. Vital to this program, too, is the teacher's willingness to develop and use the suggested techniques and materials provided by the diagnostician and resource room teacher.

Curriculum equivalents which cover the basic subjects in the child's program need to be devised. Some of these might include:

<u>Language Arts</u>

American Guidance Service

Peabody Language Kit #3

Benefic Press

Easy To Read Series
Deep Sea Adventure Series
Jim Forrest Series
Morgan Bay Mysteries

Lyons & Carnahan

Phonics We Use - C, D

George Wahr

Remedial Reading Drills, Hegge, Kirk, & Kirk

Behavioral Research Lab

Programmed Reading

McGraw-Hill

Magic World of Dr. Spello
Conquests in Reading

Continental Press

Phonics & Word Analysis
Reading-Thinking Skills

Kleeco Co.

Handwriting - Cursive

Barnell-Lofts Levels A, B

Using The Context
Following Directions
Getting The Facts
Working With Sounds
Locating The Answer

Lyons & Carnahan

Handwriting With Write & See 3

Dexter & Westbrook (Rockville Center, N.Y.)

We Read Sentences Instructional Aids Kit

Houghton-Mifflin

Reading for Meaning Series

McMillan Readers

Allied Education Council

Fitzhugh Plus Program

Phonovisual Products

Phonovisual Materials

Instructor Teaching Aids

Expanding Spelling Skills

<u>Social Studies</u>

Frank E. Richards

Finding Ourselves

SVE

Multi-Media Kit (Transportation, etc.)
Seasons

Steck-Vaughn

Your Country & Mine

Knowledge Aids

Adventures of Explorers Series

Hubbard Scientific

Small Land Form Models

Weekly Reader

Map Skills

Math

Continental Press

Modern Math
Time

John D. Caddy

The 6 Wonderful Records of Facts

Encyclopedia Brittannica Press

Discovery in Elementary School Mathematics

Houghton-Mifflin

Structural Arithmetic

Fearon Press

Money Makes Sense
Using Dollars and Sense

Instructor Teaching Aids

Practice Books III, IV

Steck-Vaughn Co.

New Working With Numbers Book 1

Allied Education Council

Fitzhugh Plus Program

Gage Textbooks

On Your Own In Arithmetic

SRA

Greater Cleveland Math Program

In addition to this, we concentrate on language concepts given in double doses, gradually building to higher level abstraction and generalization. Some teachers rewrite their own materials so they have a wide range of interesting materials that all children can use. Illustrations are created to go along with much of our teacher-made material.

The children are treated the same as the other children except

that they receive the necessary additional help. They are expected to complete the academic tasks, but these tasks are made so that this can be accomplished. In certain academic areas these children are allowed to set their own goals, and are guided in evaluating their own performances. Daily and weekly conferences are held with the pupils, examining the progress they have achieved.

The teachers work as closely as possible with the learning disability children. Many concrete objects or learning aids are made available, as is the audio-visual equipment. We also engage in using fifth and sixth grade learning disability children as helpers for children in the first grade.

In the classroom, if a child's organization is poor, he is shown a model which remains visible during his assignment. He is graded on his knowledge of the area being tested. He is not penalized for reading slowly, writing slowly, or organizing slowly. No marks of a demoralizing nature are ever placed on his paper - a "See me," or "Go over" suffices. He is rewarded with a smile of encouragement.

Involved as we are with the team approach, we aim to promote and increase parental understanding of the emotional growth and needs of the child through conferences with the social worker.

Since the behaviors vary widely in nature, severity, and prognosis, it is difficult to say what remediation measures are most effective. But an important aspect in helping solve our problems has been the team approach, with strong administrative support in changing or improving attitudes throughout the district.

At the primary level, where the emphasis is on skill development rather than on content, articulation of the learning disabilities approach into the regular curriculum requires that the program which is eventually structured is modified to fit both the teacher's behavior and the child's needs. This precautionary step is an indulged necessity in the public schools. A program can be created for a child in a one-to-one setting, but when he is integrated into the classroom, the devised program must be acceptable to the teacher for her to adapt the curriculum and structure that is suitable to all. It is the teacher

who must communicate daily with the child in an effective way and building rapport is essential.

The teacher is guided by the learning disabilities specialist to understand the paramount role she assumes in helping the child or these children. It is critical to the success of the program that she fully accept and recognize the importance of her involvement in the team approach.

Structured routines need to be devised, along with the clearcut policies and procedures the teacher will effect in the classroom. We prescribe flexibility, firmness, and consistency, and we encourage her perceptiveness.

The daily classroom schedule is facilitated to allow the teacher working time with the child. She is furnished with materials that help to motivate the child to apply himself. Explicit instructions on how to use the materials, when they should be applied, and how to locate or create additional relevant materials are provided. Some of these might include:

<u>Language Arts</u>

American Guidance Service

Peabody Language Kits Levels P, 1

Beckley-Cardy Co.

Words That Go Together
Phonetic Word Builders

Creative Playthings

Kinesthetic Letters
Kinesthetic Numbers

Follett

Just Beginning To Read Books
Listen & Hear Books
Weinkart-Phonic Readers

Garrard

Dolch Teaching Aids

Harr-Wagner

A-Z Spellers

Lyons & Carnahan

Phonics We Use, A, B

McGraw-Hill

Webster's Programmed Reading

Scott, Foresman

Rolling Reader
Rolling Consonants
Rolling Vowels

George Wahr

Remedial Reading Drills, Hegge, Kirk, & Kirk

Behavioral Research Lab

Programmed Reading

SRA

Learning To Think Series - Red, Blue, Green, Gold
Basic Reading Series - Alphabet Book, Levels, A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I

Continental Press

Phonics & Word Analysis
Reading-Thinking Skills
Seeing Likenesses & Differences
Rhyming

Kleeco

Handwriting - Manuscript

Selected Creative Communications

Louie The Lazy Listener

Warnach-Medlin

Word-Making Cards

Scott, Foresman

The First Talking Alphabet

Singer

We Discover Sounds
Sounds I hear

Knowledge Aid

Follow Through With Sound

Lyons & Carnahan

See & Say
Handwriting With Write & See - 1, 2

Phonovisual Products

Phonovisual Materials

Science

Cook

Teaching Pictures for Health & Cleanliness

Social Studies

SVE

Multi-Media Kit (Transportation, etc.)
Seasons

Instructor Activity Kits

A Day At The Zoo
Seasons -

I Fall & Winter
II Spring & Summer

My Home & Family
Visiting The Farm
Community Helpers At Work

Arithmetic

Reiniches (Goshen, Ind.)

Addition & Subtraction Jig-Saw Games
Calculating Blocks

Follett

Come & Count

Instructor Teaching Aids

Practice Books - I, II

SRA

Greater Cleveland Math Program - Ktg., 1

Cuisenaire Co. of America (Mt. Vernon, N.Y.)

Numbers in Color (Cuisenaire Rods)

However, specific devices are not our prime concern here because an inventive classroom teacher will draw on materials from many sources. She will undoubtedly utilize anything and everything that appears to benefit the individual child. The worksheets, pegboards, and games are the devices - they are not as important as the techniques employed. Praise, realistic hopes, confidence, and a good self-image are part of the technique imparted to the teacher and transmitted to the child.

The diagnosis is clearly defined and graphed for the teacher's use and the possibility of change is impressed upon her, since neither the diagnosis nor the child remains static.

It is the teacher who carries on classroom diagnostic teaching in the academic subjects, and oversees the child's social activities with his peer group. It is through her observations that signals are raised when it is time to modify certain aspects of the program.

Simple logs are kept on the child, noting performance fluctuation, low frustration level points, distractable behavior, and evidence of improvement. This continual follow-up keeps the diagnostician informed on the present program, and re-evaluation and revamping are expedited so as not to deter the child's progress.

It is in this adjusted environment, resulting from cooperative teamwork and patience, that the teacher reaches her goal of having a child with learning disabilities move forward both intellectually and emotionally.

In summary, classroom programming for children with special learning disabilities nearly always includes planning for use with the regular classroom teacher, and cannot be limited to programming for his time in the special class.